

# INTELLIGENCE BY THE MAIL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 15, 1848.

The Political and Moral Intelligences of Washington.

"Truth has sought to reach from power."

I propose in this letter to devote a few observations to a subject which has for many years occupied the attention of the American people—I mean the seat of government of the United States. Your paper enjoys the reputation of being the most extensively read of any other published on this continent. I seek it as a medium of communicating my views to the public.

If there is any circumstance to operate more than another in favor of the proposition entertained by me of the removal of the seat of the national government, it is the political and moral intelligence which its permanent location has engendered during the period of nearly a half century.

Without entering into the statistics of the expenditures of such a political measure, the public expense would be a trifling consideration compared with the great national reform which such a movement would produce. And upon this basis more than any other, would this new seat of government be erected—a political and moral reformation.

As firmly fixed in the imagination of the capital itself, is the political degradation of Washington; and where political profligacy exists, there must follow, as a natural consequence, moral inquiry.—Those who hold a different language deceive the people of this country, and impair the political utility of Washington, in which good character I am prepared to show by facts in this letter, I stand as well as fact as any one of her citizens. For it is the honorable, high minded, independent, though perhaps, in a majority of instances, without the members of the community, that would defend, and who feel the consequences of the abuses I am about to expose, more than the political and influential classes.

And what can render it otherwise? The men who are to be officers who regard the Treasury of this government as the heir-loom unalienable in its descent from political corruption to moral worthlessness, to pander to the one while it gives strength to the other—how can it be otherwise, I ask, than that such a state of things must exert its baneful influence upon character? Around the very pillars of the government corruption in all its branches clings, like poisoned virus to a healthy oak, engraving a new order of social architecture upon the crumbling ruins of the old one, and thus the very foundation of the great fabric of society.

To make this corrupt order harmonize, the opinions of the first degraded politician who enters office under a new administration, are skillfully moulded by sycophants, who are not only a man of honor would spurn from his presence, and whose claim to confidence and respect in a new incumbent, is secured by a secret misrepresentation of his associates.

To operate upon the dignitary, perhaps the sycophant has a fine establishment, a "beautiful wife and an interesting family;" and these, with the address of many years, acquired about the "purlieus of the White House," in the language of Mr. Webster, "a certain previous acquaintance," induce unworthy and base motives to neglect merit and unobtrusive merit. Years of tuition under corrupt administrations, are scarcely sufficient to teach some of these men the extent of the impositions and intrigues of the political system. They have been the dupes of their "brief authority" the instrument. At length the treachery of confiding knaves, and the decline of transitory power, teach them the extent of their official impositions, and the extent of the political system. They have been the dupes of their "brief authority" the instrument. At length the treachery of confiding knaves, and the decline of transitory power, teach them the extent of their official impositions, and the extent of the political system.

The virus of corruption thus running through the political system, is infused throughout the healthy veins of the nation, and the difference between them produces a monster of profligacy in the one, and iniquity in the other. The offspring born in this bed of vice, has none of the redeeming qualities of the national seat of government, but mark its character by the corruption, the polluted atmosphere of kingly courts.

The graces and accomplishments that impart a charm to the beauty of women—the civility and kindly bearing that give a dignity to the worth of men—the cultivated taste that elevates the noblest minds in literature and science, find no appreciation in, and receive no sympathy from, the corrupt circles of Washington.

The very quality that exerts an influence over social life, the love of domestic life, which can protect the worth scattered sparsely through the worthlessness of society.

The ignorance which spurns these, treats with an equal contempt the honest industry of the community. The man who is not content to admire in the cultivation of letters, look with an equally degraded prejudice upon those worthy occupations by which honest industry in the arts of the mechanic earns his daily bread. Hence inveterate distinctions, which divide the people into characteristic honorable occupations and disreputable pursuits.

The gambling houses which form a league with the flash hotels—which support the flash men, may, under the character of an ostentatious profession, form influential connections with wealthy and distinguished strangers, all find more favor in the *soi-disant* "good society" than the worthy mechanic, the enterprising young merchant, or the struggling student of law, medicine, or other liberal professions.

Through the extensive acquaintance formed "amidst the purlieus" of the hotels, the far-banks and the brothels of the city, the flash gentleman is enabled to introduce to the choice spirits inhabiting these circles, the most distinguished names in turn introduce him to their political friends, whose families, occupying the position of leaders of the aristocracy, have an opportunity of showing their devotion to the democratic principles of the young aristocracy. The imposture of the system, in making such an acquisition to the society which has the assurance to call itself the "best." If the political extremes here meet, the conventional ones are not farther apart—for it is not infrequently the case that after a night's revel at the "flash points," at a grand rout, the flash gentleman and his companions receive an invitation to a "State ball" at the West End!

From associations of this kind, influence in the circles of taste, to procure such a class of men and measures and officers under government. A false criterion of character is thus created by the very power that should establish a standard of high respectability, and the patronage of government is loaned to administer to the credulity of an uneducated aristocracy. The imposture, here, and sustained by political influence, do not end with the power which creates them; but, being sanctioned by present custom, transmit their evils to future times. A footing secured in the select circles of society, is the first step towards recommendation of office, effects an alliance with some amiable woman, who, unable to see through this disguise of respectability, connects her fortunes with him for life. The dissolute habits and abandoned life of the man, who takes up his abode in a place of refined pleasures and quiet home, a few months after marriage assume their accustomed force, and take their usual round. Hence, instead of the domestic circle with its holy ties, the affection and love which unite there in a loved and sacred union, are deserted and broken to replace the refined set who frequent the virtues which adorn the bar-rooms, the gambling houses, and the "cut-throat" galleries.

For the accomplishments of gentlemen, the conversation of cultivated minds, and the associates of honorable men, are substituted swindling games—the flash language of the hotels, and the society of the imported, with the resident humbugs of the city. A class is thus formed, for the most part without any other recommendation, who are able to exert an undeniable influence upon public opinion. Hence the metropolitan slanders, which originate in the refined raffianism of society, go through this crucible of vice, and are stamped with its frightful image, before they are introduced to become a part of the national scandal of the country.

All moral obligations losing their force upon this degraded class, the only remedy that operates with any degree of influence upon it is the personal accountability of each individual among them. It is occasionally held by the few gallant men who are among all the degeneracy of the times, can yet be found to vindicate the character of a lady or sustain the honor of a gentleman.

All these vices operating upon character—the loss of all that is high, respect for the delicacy of woman, the public outrage upon the brightest names among the highest circles, and the purest in the humbleness, the inappreciation of men of worth has had a woful influence upon manners. Washington, at one time, was looked to by the whole nation as the model of the elegance and refinement of a polite capital, has nothing now to boast but the insolence of office, with the degeneracy among those who are supposed to be the lights of the age, and an example of urbanity of manners and dignity of bearing.

Separated, as it is, from the sordid influences of commerce, it was thought that the elevated employments which were conferred upon the government, would impart a grace and elegance to life, and a Christian tone to society. So far from such being the case, the disasters which follow the reverses of traffic in commercial cities are not to be compared to the heart-rending scenes which are witnessed from office at the seat of government. Without appreciating the industry of trade, but ready to enjoy its lucrative profits, in the same manner that the struggling energies of literature are disregarded, and the paltry success of political hacks rewarded,

\* A notorious place south of Pennsylvania avenue and across the Canal.

the parvenue who may sit up in Lafayette square, or the mushroom official who may patronize him for his wealth, but who would spurn him for his poverty, is the political degradation of Washington.

The evils grown in this soil, unlike the golden fruit of Hesperides, seem to be nurtured by the very poison of the upas and guarded by the very venom of the basilisk. From the South of the wretched man of sixty, who enters it, but his nature undergoes a change from good to evil. The frankness of youth gives way to the suspicion of age—the confidence of men of honor to the distrust of villains. Hence the open-hearted confidence of the wretched man of sixty, who enters it, but his nature undergoes a change from good to evil. The frankness of youth gives way to the suspicion of age—the confidence of men of honor to the distrust of villains. Hence the open-hearted confidence of the wretched man of sixty, who enters it, but his nature undergoes a change from good to evil.

Exceptions to the general rule of the neglect of worth and the reward of worthlessness seem to be made by the skillful efforts of the sycophants, who, by the prevailing depravity. Hence, you occasionally find an instance of amiable merit promoted, to atone for the ostracism of conspicuous worth and brilliant talents. In the same degree is the rare patronage of literary men extended. The harmless madness that periodically shows its symptoms in fits of raving poetry—the weak and sickly polemics that from time to time take venerable strides in feeble prose—now and then find in the Treasury an asylum, and in the pocket a reward for their efforts. To give an appearance of health to this invalid country, is sometimes found the vigorous mind of a struggling youth of talents, or the ripe experience of a learned man of age, whom poverty has forced to abandon the slow rising of a profession, or the punishment of a law of degradation, and compelled to loan their able pen to the support of feeble men. Thus they corrupt talents before they notice them; or else they would leave these rare instances of patronage to the cold sympathy of the literary men extended. The harmless madness that periodically shows its symptoms in fits of raving poetry—the weak and sickly polemics that from time to time take venerable strides in feeble prose—now and then find in the Treasury an asylum, and in the pocket a reward for their efforts.

So closely linked is this political system with the social, that the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice are governed by a law of degradation. Society, taking its course from the pernicious example of government, patronize, with the same indiscriminate rule, unworthy men, who are suffered to run riot among it. The encouragement of the virtuous, and the punishment of the wicked, are good morals, as the gratification extended to worthless men, in the other, corrupts good manners. The evils resulting from this do not, in most instances, fall upon the evil-doers; no, they most always descend upon innocent heads. As a consequence, a slender, upright virtue, has been found a most omnipotent weapon in Washington to protect guilt, and to a most relentless and savage extent has it been used. Strangers, who find the seat of government a convenient point of observation, are not only exposed to the degree of security against exposure in the existence of so many of the remedies of the elegant Alcibiades, prepared by the most licentious scandal-mongers of the capital. This class hold their meetings as regularly as Congress, and in the language of Mr. Webster, "a certain previous acquaintance," induce unworthy and base motives to neglect merit and unobtrusive merit. Years of tuition under corrupt administrations, are scarcely sufficient to teach some of these men the extent of the impositions and intrigues of the political system. They have been the dupes of their "brief authority" the instrument. At length the treachery of confiding knaves, and the decline of transitory power, teach them the extent of their official impositions, and the extent of the political system.

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petitioner's claim is founded on a demand of her late husband, as liquidated and acknowledged by the government of Spain, on the 18th of May, 1830, which she alleges has been since discharged by the United States for their benefit, without his assent. Mr. Meade was an American citizen, and was for many years domiciled in Spain. On the 22d of February, 1819, he had unliquidated claims of a large amount and of long standing, against the government of Spain, on contracts made, amounting to \$373,879, and for personal injuries sustained, having been imprisoned for two years. A treaty was signed at Washington, in February, 1819, for the cession of the Floridas. The ratification, by the terms, was to be exchanged within six months. The provisions of the treaty were favorable and appropriate to his claims, as then existing; and he placed his claims on the ratification of those of a national character appropriate, as providing a board for ascertaining the amount and validity of claims which Spain hitherto had neither liquidated nor acknowledged. And had the treaty gone into effect, as then contemplated by the parties, the claims of Mr. Meade would have been included in it. The treaty, however, failed to take effect; and circumstances intervened, before the renewal of negotiations, that rendered the provisions of the treaty inoperative. The claims of Mr. Meade, not having been ratified by Spain, were declared null by our minister, and subsequently by the President in a message to Congress. On the 18th of May, 1830, Mr. Meade's late husband and the validity acknowledged. This adjustment was made by both parties, in the faith that Spain, and Spain alone, was to be responsible for the debt. It was made at the instance of our government, which took upon itself the responsibility of the claim, as it stood at the signing of the treaty, were entirely changed, both in regard to the evidence and the responsibility. The infraction of the treaty was the subject of a national claim. And such was the state of the mind of Mr. Meade, at the date of the treaty with Spain, of February, 1834. By the first and third articles, the parties reciprocally renounced all claims preferred by each against the other, of whatsoever claim, denomination, or origin, from 1819, the date of the former treaty, until the signing of the treaty of 1834. The Committee on Foreign Affairs took the ground, in their report, that if the claim, founded on the refusal to furnish the documents, was renounced by the treaty, the claimant is left to seek redress from the United States, and they reported a bill for this purpose. The bill was discussed four or five days, and was to-day laid upon the table by a vote of 118 to 38.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1848.

Yucatan and the Senate.—The Mexican Treaty.

The Senate are looking on as quietly at the work of extermination in Yucatan, as if the preservation of human life were a thing of itself beneath the dignity of human legislation. It was curious to hear to-day honest John Davis talking over the massacre of the whites in Yucatan, precisely as he would talk over the destruction of so much live-oak timber. He argued that there were serious provocations given to the Indians for vengeance, and that hence their indiscriminate slaughter of men, women and children, is no affair of ours. But we will let that pass, with the simple remark that such arguments as that of Mr. Davis, which are so common, are the work of a heartless person, in process of rapid extermination, call to us for assistance. We suppose Mr. Davis thought he had made a strong point against Mr. Polk in showing that he had changed his views on the Mexican question, since the discussion many years ago in Congress of the Panama question. But where was Mr. Davis at that time, and where is he now? Has not he changed sides, or swapped places with Col. Polk, and does not the latter in the exchange get the best? (We believe that's the Mexican word for weight.) Does he not get the best of the bargain? But the true secret of the opposition to the military occupation of Yucatan, is annexation. The fear is, that it may be brought into the Presidential election, and that the President will carry Texas, Louisiana, and Wisconsin. If this be so, where is their majority to come from? No where but from New York. Let General Taylor but carry two or three of the southern States, and it will devolve on New York, as in 1844, to decide the contest.

Then what a scrambling for the thirty-six votes of New York! What bargaining, what bantering, what betting, what bribery, what boons and bounties for the Empire State! Who can offer the greatest reward, the party principle, the principle of the largest bait, the big fish. And who will be the lucky bidder for the Empire State? All the bait whigs can offer is to take a candidate for the Presidency out of New York, who they probably will carry, and to give Gov. Seward, Gov. Young, or Millard Fillmore.

The democrats can do more. In my next letter, I will tell you what they can do, and probably will do, before their election day.

O. P. Q. OF WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, May 12, 1848.

Laying the Corner Stone of the Grand Washington National Monument.

The Board of Managers of the National Washington Monument Society of this city, having obtained a most beautiful site for the proposed monument in honor of the illustrious Washington, has commenced the great work, and the foundation is nearly completed. The portion of the design adopted, which was furnished by Mr. Mills, an architect of merit, intended to be first erected, is the obelisk, which is to be elevated 500 feet, with a base of 42 feet square, and a top of 12 feet square. The foundation will be commenced on Monday next, and the work carried up as far as it can be done, till the 4th of July next, when the corner stone is to be laid with great and imposing ceremonies. To this end, preparations are being made by the committee, and arrangements. Mr. Speaker Winthrop is to deliver the address on that occasion, and invitations have been sent to all the Masonic societies and other associations of a kindred nature, in the United States, to attend; to the Governors of the States and Territories, to send deputations; to colleges, public schools, volunteer companies, &c., so as to form a grand military and civic procession, worthy of the occasion. As it is to be a monument erected in honor of the people, it is to be a monument of interest in this noble and patriotic undertaking, and if the board should succeed in executing the plan it has adopted, of which there seems to be but little doubt at present, it will be a structure that will stand as a monument to the memory of the great Washington, and to those who have so nobly given it their aid. In short, it promises to be one of the wonders of the world.

WASHINGTON, May 12, 1848.

General Scott.

The Clay whigs do not yet despair of defeating Old Zachary in convention by General Scott. Old Hasty has fought as many hard battles in Mexico as Old Zachary—he has suffered as much from the Secretary of War—he has been equally unfortunate at political writing—and thus far he stands as good as General Taylor on his own strongest position. But when we consider that General Scott is a man, and will be claimed by the North, and that from his birth in Virginia he will be claimed by the South; when we consider that his profound respect for the Catholic Church will tell well upon Catholics in these inland States; and when we consider that his military and political achievements, and that his old brown coat, and that blunt honesty that has never been at fault if left to itself. These peculiarities of Taylor's personality, he is a far more available man. The greatest point of all in favor of Old Zachary, is his simplicity—that check strict and that old brown coat, and that blunt honesty that has never been at fault if left to itself. These peculiarities of Taylor's personality, he is a far more available man. The greatest point of all in favor of Old Zachary, is his simplicity—that check strict and that old brown coat, and that blunt honesty that has never been at fault if left to itself. These peculiarities of Taylor's personality, he is a far more available man. The greatest point of all in favor of Old Zachary, is his simplicity—that check strict and that old brown coat, and that blunt honesty that has never been at fault if left to itself. These peculiarities of Taylor's personality, he is a far more available man. The greatest point of all in favor of Old Zachary, is his simplicity—that check strict and that old brown coat, and that blunt honesty that has never been at fault if left to itself. 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